

Whosoever Will 9-13-26

Well, good morning. Can you believe we are in the last chapter of the Gospel of John? It seemed like when we started it would never get here, and now all of a sudden it is. This is the final chapter. It is the epilogue. It is the story of being restored in order to serve. A quick glance, we talked a little bit last week about the epilogue, about the conclusion of the gospel, And yet it didn't conclude, there's still one more chapter. But what better finish could the book have than this? We have seen Thomas's dramatic turnaround, his recognition, his affirmation that indeed the Christ is alive. We have seen John's statement of purpose, if you will, why he wrote the book so that you may have life in His name. And Paul has already reminded us that belief comes through the word. And John says, "Oh I hope my words will be able to convert people. " It's not that John had any second thoughts and decided he needed to write one more chapter. It wasn't like that at all.

We know John wrote everything under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, but there were some kind of loose ends that needed to be tied up, and so we have now chapter 21 that does just exactly that. So, of course, when you're reading through the Bible, the next book after John is the book of Acts. And, the two principal players in the book of Acts are Paul, Saul and Peter. Luke, of course, wrote the book. But it is very doubtful that Luke and John had any interaction whatsoever. Luke wrote around 60 A. D. John wrote his gospel probably around 90 A. D. So very unlikely that they had any correlation, any I'm going to pick up the story where you left off, Probably nothing like that happens, but John wants to clear up two last points here in chapter 21.

And one of them is how did blustering, loudmouth, always speaking when not spoken to Peter denying Jesus three times. How, did he become the force that to be reckoned with that Doctor Luke records in the book of Acts? And. Then, secondly, there was a rumor that went around for years that Jesus said at the end of his life that the Apostle John was going to live forever. So, John says, "I need to clear up a couple of things here," and so that's kind of the motivation. That's the story behind John chapter twenty one. John also leaves us with some instructions about our relationship with God. He talks about that first of all we are to obey Him, we are to become fishers of men. Secondly, he says that we are to love Him, We are to be a shepherd to others as we travel our path of life.

And thirdly, we are to follow him. Follow Jesus. We are to be his disciples. We are to be his hands, his feet, his eyes here on earth. Scripture doesn't really tell us when these events recorded in chapter 21 occurred. Obviously, it had to be sometime between the second Sunday after the resurrection when Jesus appeared to Thomas. And the other ten. And his ascension back to heaven, which is recorded in Acts chapter one. So here in John chapter twenty one, seven of the boys have decided to go fishing. They're actually brave enough now to venture out from behind locked doors. So, we still don't know how long after the crucifixion and resurrection that this story takes place, but they're braver now and they've decided to go out. They decide to

go back to their old habit. They go back to fishing and they've had a bad night of fishing.

They need a little bit of encouragement, so this part of John's story begins in verse fifteen. Now, when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" And he said to him, "Yes Lord you know that I love you." And he said to them, "Tend my lambs." So, of course, as we've already heard in the first part of this story today, they meet at the Sea of Galilee. Jesus comes. They Don't recognize him at first, then they do. He has a fire and food ready. Now they have shared a meal with him, and the implication is here that this meal has been shared completely in silence. There is no record of what was said, so that perhaps they just said nothing during the meal. Peter has of course impulsively had jumped into the lake, had swum to shore, so he has now dried out, he's warmed up by the fire, he's physically nourished.

And so now it's time for him and Jesus to get down to business. Jesus asks Peter three questions, And the implication may have been that this is kind of a private conversation that the others were not privy to. This conversation so Jesus has three admonitions for him: "Tend my sheep," and he does it three times, once for each of Peter's denials on that night recently. And he says to him, "Do you love more than these?" So what is the "more than these"? What is Jesus comparing Peter's love to? Could it be his fishing business? He had given all up to follow Jesus, and now he had says to the disciples, "I think I'm going back to fishing. I don't know what else there is for me to do." Is he saying maybe, "Do you love more than these other six disciples gathered here?"

On the seashore this morning, you've been through a lot together over these last three years. And you love me, you love them, but how much do you love me? And Jesus uses a specific word here for love. As we know, there is multiple words for love in the Bible. The word that he chooses here in verse fifteen is agape, unconditional love, love with no strings attached.

Unconditional surrender to the will of God. Love God as He loves you. Love God as He loved Jesus. So it is a very specific word. Peter replies, "Well, yeah, you know I love you." But Peter uses the word phileo, Philadelphia brotherly love. We are best buddies Jesus You know that, but it's also a word that implies a casual friendship. It implies not total surrender.

And Jesus' admonition after Peter's response is, "Tend my lambs. Devote yourself totally to my flock." It implies tender, loving care. No longer a fisher of men, but now you're going to be a shepherd of God's flock. You're going to have a new career. It is a word that is in that ongoing tense that we find so many times in the Bible : continue for the rest of your life to tend. The flock. And with careful preparation, with proper care, with good food, the lambs of my flock will grow up to be sheep. Those servants will become witnesses. Verse 16 Jesus poses the question a second time, and he said to him a second time, Simon, son of John do you love me? And he Peter said yes Lord you know that I love you.

And he, Jesus, said to him, "Shepherd my sheep." So Jesus asked Peter the question a second time. Jesus again uses the word agape. Do you love me unconditionally? And Peter again replies, "You know we're best buddies. We've been around each other for three and a half years." But there's a very subtle change in the wording here. In verse 15, Jesus had commanded him to tend the sheep. Here he says shepherd my sheep. My sheep, the word "tend" means to nourish or to provide food, daily care, and it's an ongoing task. Sheep have to be fed every day. He says it's something you are going to do for the rest of your life. But now here in verse sixteen he uses the word "shepherd," and more so than feeding, it implies guiding, protecting, watching over the flock. How many times in John?

Did we talk about the job of the shepherd and how the shepherd, uh, The keeper of the gate slept in in the gate at night to keep the sheep safe? This is the image that Jesus is painting here. Not just tending them, but shepherding them, watching over them, protecting them. Uh together between tending and shepherding, The two together, kind of combine the idea of both spiritual nourishment, but leadership guidance, counseling. Showing people the paths of righteousness. Sheep like us are stupid and defenseless. They need all the love, the guidance, and the nourishment that we can possibly give them. They need the protection of the shepherd. I read somewhere this week that when Jesus talks about us as sheep of his flock, It's not a compliment that sheep are dirty stinky ;. They are stupid ;. They don't know how to find their way around without the shepherd. So it's.

Not exactly a compliment when God calls us His sheep, But notice too that here Jesus shifts from lambs to sheep in his conversation with Peter. Lambs implies young, vulnerable; we'd call them brand new Christians. They need extra attention, extra care. They need basic instruction. They need protection from the world, from the things of the devil. They need warning. But the word "sheep" implies kind of a larger flock, older Mature sheep, more mature Christians. But even those that have been saved for many, many years still need leadership. They need guidance, they need counseling, they need steady oversight. They need a good example set for them. So, there is shepherding and there's tending and there's sheep and there's lambs all in this story that John is telling. Verse 17 the questioning continues:

Jesus says to him a third time, Simon, son of John, do you love me? And Peter was hurt because he said to him the third time, do you love me? And he said to him, Lord you know all things. You know that I love you. And Jesus said to him tend my sheep. So Jesus poses the question a third time, and he kind of turns the table on Peter. Jesus uses the word phileo. Do you phileo love me? Do you really love me like your best buddy? Am I your best friend? We've been through a lot together. Is that really how you see our relationship? And the Bible says here, Peter was hurt. He uses a word here that means grief or distress or sorrow, not we think of hurt as physical injury.

But Peter has a deep heartfelt sadness. He's hurt to the core that Jesus has had to ask him this three times. But it leads to repentance, it leads to soul searching when you are hurt. And he was worried that Jesus was doubting his loyalty. So Peter's had a real wake up call, and it's so interesting that each

one of these questionings has been one for each of the denials on that night. So Jesus is reminding Peter, "I haven't forgotten what you did, But I am forgiving you for what you did, and I am commissioning you to a great and wonderful life ahead of you." So Peter responds very brokenheartedly, agape here in verse 17. "I love You like the Father loves You. I love You like the love You have for me. You know I have failed You. I know I have failed You."

And I am humbled that you could still love me after all the things that I have done. And he goes on and says, "And Lord, you know everything. You know my heart. You know what's deep within me, and you know that deep down inside, yes, I do agape you." So one more commissioning: "Feed my sheep." We've had tend, we've had shepherd, and now we have feed my sheep. Don't just lead them. Feed them, nourishment. Good, put good food out in the sheep trough. And interestingly here, uh the word that he uses for sheep actually translates dear sheep. Sheep that I love dearly. All, the sheep in God's flock are dear to him, and Peter was going to come in contact with many of them and through his written word, uh in the scripture, he's going to influence millions upon millions upon millions of people through his word. But it's also a reminder to us today as.

Christians, as pastors, as Bible fellowship teachers. Young Christians need tending. They need guidance. They need counsel. This is a new experience for them. They've never been Christians before, but also we have church families that need physical attention. They need spiritual needs met. They need to be fed faithfully from the Word of God, One writer, said : " W hat good. Is it for someone to be saved and then find that there is no church?" For them to attend where they can be fed and led, so that's our job to feed and to lead. We are to be that sanctuary, we are to be that church where they can come. Whether it's the young Christians or the old Christians, they all need the same thing. Verse eighteen: Truly, truly heads up this is important. I tell you, when you were younger, you used to put on your belt and walk wherever you wanted. But when you grow old.

You will stretch out your hands, and someone else will put your belt on you and bring you where you do not want to go. Now he said this indicating by what kind of death he would glorify God. And when he had said this, he said to him, Follow me. A final word to Peter on this day, just as Peter is rejoicing that Jesus has restored him, Jesus suddenly brings up the fact well you are going to die a martyr. Uh the the good with the bad I guess uh at the last supper, supper, Peter had boasted I will lay down my life for you. That's in John 13, 37. Uh, again, on that same night on the way to the Garden of Gethsemane Peter boasted. Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you. That's in Matthew 26, 33. And of course, we all know before the night was over, Peter denied him three times. So Jesus now says let me tell you what's going to happen.

In the future, he says, "One day not real soon, but one day your work on earth is going to be done. You are going to be led to your own execution just as I was." So John makes a reference here to Peter's belt, an unusual thing to be talking about in this description of the future. But Jesus is contrasting Peter's aging and martyrdom. That when Peter was young, he dressed himself. He

tied his own belt. He did what he wanted to do. He went where he wanted to go. He was headstrong. So Jesus is saying, not always going to be like that one day in your old age, others are going to take your belt, They're going to tie your hands and they're going to lead you where they want you to go. They're going to lead you to death uh, and he said it's going to happen. Peter I don't tell you when but it's going to happen.

His future arrest, his future crucifixion. And of course, church tradition tells us that Peter died at the hands of Nero, probably around sixty eight AD. So about thirty five years after this conversation. But tradition also tells us that Peter requested to be crucified upside down, Feeling that he was not worthy to die in the same manner that his Lord and Savior had. So In spite of all these denials, in spite of all the doubts and fears that Peter has had, Jesus says, "Follow Me." And again it is that ongoing tense. Keep on following Me till your very last breath. Never give up. Never surrender. Keep on keeping on. There is a vast difference here between sonship and discipleship, and Peter actually.

Has both here. Sonship is salvation; it is accepting Jesus as Lord and Savior, becoming a child of God. Discipleship is the next step; it is following Jesus. Peter sinned; he denied Jesus, and when he did this, their fellowship was broken. That's why it was so important for them to have this conversation on the shore of Galilee for Peter to confess his sins, for Jesus to forgive his sins. So, That's why confession is so important. It restores that broken fellowship that we have with God. When we sin, it breaks our fellowship. So we have both salvation and we have fellowship, we have discipleship. Jesus has commanded him to follow Him and it's a message of restoration. "I have forgiven you, put this behind you and we're moving forward from here on Peter, take up your cross and follow Me."

And that's exactly what Peter did. And what a life he lived for the next thirty plus years! He's going to be a dynamic witness for Jesus. It's going to begin on the day of Pentecost. He's going to preach probably one of the greatest sermons ever preached. He's going to write two books in the New Testament. He is mentioned about fifty eight times in the book of Acts. There would be no book of Acts without Peter ;. It would be a very boring book. He's going to become a mentor to young John Mark. John Mark, possibly his mother was the woman who hosted the disciples. It's where the Last Supper may have been held. It's where they were hiding after the crucifixion and John Mark was her son. He traveled for a while with Paul and Barnabas, but they fell out. John Mark just wasn't quite up to the task at that point in his life, but ultimately he became a great leader in the church. He wrote the book of Mark so many, many things happened in young John Mark's life because.

Of Peter, possibly the last supper being held there. But when Peter was released from prison miraculously by an angel, the first place he went was to John Mark's mother's home. Early church leaders record that Mark's gospel is really believed to be a collection of preaching and recollections that Peter told John Mark over the years that. Gospel of Mark is really sort of Peter's version of the gospel that they were so close. He did mentor the young man. In First Peter five thirteen, Peter affectionately referred to John Mark as my son. Such a close personal mentoring relationship that they had. The book of Acts

records Peter and John healing a lame man, preaching together in the temple. He continued to be a great influence on his.

Brother Andrew and James and John, his fellow fishermen, That through the remainder of their lives, they had some great adventures, even together on occasion. Paul and Peter met on a couple of occasions in Jerusalem, and usually when they did, they clashed. But, he had an incredible vision in the home of the Gentile Cornelius about the inclusion of the Gentiles into God's ministry. So Peter was to become a monumental man. So it was essential that Jesus restore him on this day, get him on firm footing and send him on his way. Throughout his ministry, he remained impulsive. He remained passionate about his Lord, but he did faithfully follow Jesus to his dying day, just as Jesus had commanded him to do. Peter had to be restored. If he had not been restored, he would have probably died a lonely fisherman in Galilee.

He would not have been present on the day of Pentecost. As I said earlier, he's mentioned 58 times in the book of Acts, and frankly, The first 15 chapters of the book of Acts would have been very boring if it hadn't been for the exuberant Peter that his story is told there. Verse 20 : And Peter turned around and saw the disciple, whom Jesus loved following them. And, the one who had also leaned back on his chest at supper and said, Lord, who is the one who is betraying you? So apparently, Peter really takes Jesus' command to follow him literally. Jesus begins walking along the seashore and Peter follows. And apparently, John, The disciple whom Jesus loved, always very humble, never refers to himself by name in the gospel, but always makes sure that you know that it is him that he is referring to himself leaves, no doubt that he was an eyewitness to all of these. So Jesus walks Peter follows him and apparently.

John follows Peter, verse twenty one. And so Peter, upon seeing him, John said to Jesus, Lord, what of this man? You can imagine that Peter has had this just rush of relief that flooded over him when Jesus restored him. How fearful. He's been about seeing Jesus again about the reaction to the denials, and we all have those rushes of. Relief when you get good news when you were expecting bad, you were expecting the worst from the doctor and it turns out everything's fine. Or you've offended somebody, you've broken a relationship and that relationship is mended. What a burden is lifted! So that's kind of the way Peter's feeling. So, he's kind of feeling his oats here, and he goes back to his old habits. They're hard to break. He just can't stay out of other people's business. Jesus has shown Peter his future.

So now Peter wants to know John's future. Well, what about this guy walking behind us? Verse twenty two and Jesus says to him, "If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me." Oh Pete, don't press your luck here. We've mended our ways. We're on a new footing. Mind your own business and it'll keep you out of a lot of trouble in the future. If you just won't meddle in other people's business. You follow me. And I will take care of John. Your job is to follow me, to keep my commandments, to tend my sheep, to foster my sheep, to mentor my sheep. What if I do decide I want to let him live till I come again? That's between him and me; that's none of your business. Verse twenty three And. Therefore, this account went out among the brothers

that the disciple would not die. A rumor went out that John would not die, and yet Jesus.

Did not say to him that he would not die, but only if I want him to remain until I come. What is it to you? Well, nothing travels further or faster than a good juicy rumor, and that's what happens here. Jesus didn't say that John would live until He returned to Earth, but He also didn't say that John wouldn't die before He returned. It simply was none of Peter's business; it was between John and, And Jesus, and remember too, only seven people were present on this morning. So it had to be one or more of them that circulated this rumor that John was going to live forever. So as Christians, we have a responsibility to get our facts straight before we share them. John actually did outlive the remaining disciples. He died in his mid eighties. He's probably the only one that was not martyred. He died of old age, um.

And I guess if you really in truth think about it, John really did live to see Jesus again. He had a vision of Him on the Isle of Patmos at about age 95, and that vision became the book of the Revelation. So in a way he did live to see Jesus come again. He did not live to see the second coming. ; hasn't happened yet even for us, but he did live to see Jesus on the Isle of Patmos. Verse 24: And, this is the disciple who is testifying about these things and wrote these things. And we know that his testimony is true. John again testifies to the authenticity of it, that he was an eyewitness, that each of these things that he has reported, he did indeed witness. These things, every word, every event in this gospel are true; they're verifiable. And then he says we.

No, this testimony is true. Probably talking about himself and the other disciples. They possibly talked about it after Jesus' ascension back to heaven. Possibly as John went on through his life, he saw the others occasionally. They reminisced, they conferred, they refreshed their memory about the events that had happened. So we here some people think was an editorial comment that was added after The gospel was written. John was living in Ephesus when he wrote the gospel, so some believe that the Ephesian church took this gospel, looked at it, and added this "we know this to be true. " So, the " we " could have been John and the other disciples ;, it could have been some of the brothers there in the church in Ephesus after the book was written. We know Scripture is inspired of God ;. We know every word is in it because God wanted it to be. So. Whatever "the we" is here.

God intended for it to be there. It is God inspired. It is God breathed. Verse 25, But there are also many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I expect that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. The other four gospels are not the lives of Christ. They are the single life of Christ. It's four separate views of the same events. Each has its own emphasis, each has its own perspective, But you put all four of them together, and we've done that many times in this book. Compared scripture to scripture as particularly the crucifixion. We looked at all the other gospels to get all of the details of what happened on that day. But combined together, these four gospels give a unified view of Jesus and his time on earth from the beginning to the end and basically even beyond that.

John chose eight miracles. He chose seven great “I am” statements. He chose many metaphors like wind and birth and the temple, light. He chose two monumental prayers, the model prayer, the great high priestly prayer in order to tell his story. But he says here, As great as this story is there’s even more that needs to be told. And he says, there is really not room enough to tell all of it. All of it, he says, the world couldn’t hold it all. Some scholar has sat down and has estimated that the Gospel of John can be read leisurely in about three hours. But the question is, How long would it take to record to read all of the events that happened in Jesus’ life over three and a half years? Because many times in the Gospels, we would skip ahead as much as six months ;. We would skip over things that happened. So.

It’s literally true that only in eternity will we know the entire story of when the Word became flesh? And dwelt among us, and what a journey it has been. You’ve got a handout here that kind of highlights all of these things that we talked about that John included in this gospel :, the temptation, the parables, the beatitudes, the mysteries, the proverbs, the miracles, the signs. The I AMs. So check that out during the week and see all the other things that we have talked about here. Well, that brings us to America 250. Today we’re going to talk about something a little closer to home. His name was Booker T Washington, and he lived from 1856 until 1915. He was probably in that time, the most influential African American leader and educator of his day.

After graduating from the Hampton Institute in Virginia, he was offered the position as the headmaster of a new school in Tuskegee, Alabama. In 1881, he opened the Tuskegee Normal School for Colored Teachers. By 1915 and opened in 1881, 1915, he had built it into a school of one hundred and seven buildings. It spread over two thousand acres. It had 1500 students and 200 teachers. And he renamed it Tuskegee Institute. The curriculum included the traditional academic courses that were available in many other schools, but also courses in industry, trade skills were required before graduation. As a child in Sunday school he had learned the value of character, of training, of the head, the hand, the heart.

And later in his life, He wrote this : “ The Christ- like work, which the churches of all denominations in America have done, would have convinced me of the value of the Christian life. If I were not already a believer.” So we talk so often about our Christian witness. We talk about others seeing Jesus in us. And here it is in Scripture. The Bible tells us, “Train up a child.” In the way he should go, and even when he grows old, he will not stray from it. And that was one of the founding characteristics of the Tuskegee Institute. Father, thank you for this word that you have given us. Lord, thank you for the power of it, the beauty of it, the might of it. Help us to take John’s Gospel, Lord. And as we go that we would shepherd, that we would mentor, that we would lead other sheep to where the good food is. Lord and that we would be faithful to your word.

Guide us this week, Lord. The places we go, the things that we do, Lord, That they would be what you would have us to do and what you would have us to say. For it’s in your name we pray. Amen.

John Twenty one Restored to Serve Take Aways

Fishers of men was not a new concept when Jesus called His
disciples

The Greeks and the Romans used it
To mean catching someone's attention
And seek to persuade them to your point of view

The disciples were fishing for live fish
As Christians we seek out spiritually dead fish

AND

If we listen to Jesus, He can point us to the right fishing hole

Did you notice that John gave an exact count of the fish ?

A common practice in his day

The fish were equally divided among the fishermen
Today we don't know how many fish are being caught
God has many boats and fishermen out in the world
But when Jesus returns the exact number will be know
The net will not break and none will be lost

His name was Booker T Washington and he lived from 1856 to 1915, He was the most influential African American leader and educator of his day. After graduating from Hampton Institute in Virginia he was offered the position as head of a new school in Tuskegee, AL. In 1881 he opened the Tuskegee Normal School for Colored Teachers. By 1915 he had built it into a school of 107 buildings spread over 2000 acres with 1500 students and 200 teachers and renamed it "Tuskegee Institute."

The curriculum included traditional academic courses but industry and trade skills were also required. As a child in Sunday School he earned the value of character and training of the head, hand and heart. Later in his life he wrote "the Christ-

like work which the Churches of all denominations in America have done would have convinced me of the value of the Christian life if I were not already a believer.”

Train up a child in the way he should go. Even when he grows older he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6